Message Text

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PAGE 01   ALGIER 01136 100638Z
ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 /021 W
                ------------------067760 100645Z /15
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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8345

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1136

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, AG, SY
SUBJ: BIOGRAPHIC REPORT ON NEW ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA

1. ON APRIL 9, ALGERIAN PRESS ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENT OF ABDELKADER
BENKACI AS GOA AMBASSADOR TO SYRIA, BENKACI WAS BORN 22 APRIL 1936
IN ORAN, ALGERIA. HE IS OF KABYLE DESCENT AND STUDIED ARABIC AT
CONSTANTINE AND THEN WENT TO CAIRO WHERE HE STAYED FOR TEN YEARS
DURING THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE STUDYING AT THE UNIVERISTY OF
CAIRO AND WORKING FOR THE PROVISIONAL ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT. AFTER
INDEPENDENCE, HE STAYED BRIEFLY IN CAIRO AS THE FIRST CHARGE D'-
AFFAIRES AND THEN WENT TO DAR ES SALAAM WHERE HE ALSO SERVED AS
CHARGE D'AFFAIRES. BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1964 AND CA 1970. BENKACI WAS
ACCREDITED TO ALGERIA'S UN MISSION AS COUNSELOR AND IN 1965 WAS
HIS COUNTRY'S ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SPECIAL POLITICAL
COMMITTEE. RETURNING TO ALGERIA, HE WAS APPOINTED HEAD OF THE ARAB
AFFAIRS DIVISION WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

2. BENKACI IS A BACHELOR. HE SPEAKS FLUENT FRENCH, NATIVE ARABIC
AND CREDITABLE ENGLISH. DURING HIS STINT AT THE UN, AMERICAN OFFI-
CIALS CHARACTERIZED HIM AS PERSONABLE, OUTGOING, AND STRAIGHTFORWARD,
BUT AT THE SAME TIME CRITICAL OF THE U.S. ROLE IN VIETNAM AND IN
CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

3. BENKACI IS CONSIDERED A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF FONMIN BOUTEFLIKA.
HE HAS BEEN ON MOST IMPORTANT TRIPS BOUTEFLIKA HAS TAKEN IN MANY
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PAGE 02   ALGIER 01136 100638Z

YEARS, INCLUDING ABORTIVE SAHARA MISSION IN RABAT IN JULY 1975 AND
BOUMEDIENE'S RECENT SWING THROUGH THE MIDDLE EAST. HE IS FIRST OF
GROUP OF YOUNGER OFFICIALS WHO LEFT THEIR JOBS IN 1977 WITH PROMISE
OF AMBASSADORIAL POSTS TO BE GIVEN AN EMBASSY. DAMASCUS APPOIN-
TMENT INDICATES CONSIDERABLE REGIME CONFIDENCE IN BENKACI.
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Message Attributes

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Concepts: BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, AMBASSADORS
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Draft Date: 10 apr 1978
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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